

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of September 22, 2015**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Lynn Doney, Matthew Gadbois, Kenneth W. Goslant, and K. David Maxwell. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Arlington Supplee (Chair, Board of Listers), Lawton Rutter (Chief, Northfield Ambulance Service), Brandon Gallant (Northfield Ambulance Service), Mark Podgwaite (Northfield Ambulance Service), Mary Kilroy (Bridges Running Club), Shawn Sweet (O'Maddi's Deli & Café), Kaylan Sweet (O'Maddi's Deli & Café), Michele Langley (Chair, Recreation Committee), Michael McGinnis (Dynamos Soccer Club), Sally Davidson (Recreation Committee), Gerard LaVarnway, Nancy LaVarnway, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Chair Quinn called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** Chair Quinn asked that agenda be adjusted to add the Recreation Committee and the LaVarnways to the agenda under "Public Participation."
- IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):**

- a. **Mary Kilroy, NES Bridges Running Club: Permission to Hold 5k Fun Run/Walk.** Ms. Kilroy stated that the Northfield Elementary School has a running club that meets after school weekly. The members would like permission to hold their own 5k fun walk/run on town streets on Saturday, October 24, 2015, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The race will begin at Norwich University's Plumley Armory, go north on Central Street, west on Wall Street, southward on Water Street, and doubling back after the turnaround near Dole Hill. (*This is the same route that will be used this coming Saturday [09/26/15] for the 2nd Annual Michael Zemanek Memorial Foundation's 5k Family Fun Run/Walk*). The runners will be joined by members of the Norwich University and Northfield High School cross-country teams, etc. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to grant permission for the Bridges Running Club to hold a 5k fun run/walk at the times and locations indicated above. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Shawn and Kaylan Sweet, O'Maddi's Deli & Café: Approval of First Class Liquor License Application.** The Sweets would like to serve wine and beer at their restaurant so are asking the Select Board to approve their liquor license application. Selectman Doney asked if there were plans to have drinking at the tables situated on the sidewalk in front of the restaurant. Mr. Sweet said that they had planned to do this starting next summer. The Sweets will be applying for a separate outside consumption license next spring. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve and sign the liquor license application for O'Maddi's Deli & Café. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Michele Langley, Chair, Recreation Committee.** Ms. Langley would like to provide the Select Board with a brief overview of her committee's activities over the past few months. She noted that Northfield Boy Scout Wil Hallstrom completed his Eagle Scout project to replace the deteriorating World War II memorial at Northfield Falls with a granite monument. He did a very good job on the project and the money for materials, etc. was obtained through fundraising activities. The Committee looked into a plan to create a walk/bike path connecting Memorial Park and the Falls Park but has run into problems getting permission from Doyon Road landowners to allow the path to run through their properties. A different route is being explored. The benches and backstops at Memorial Park were replaced through the efforts of volunteers and Northfield High School. The new picnic benches on the Northfield Common were provided by Ken Sears and will be sealed and stored by the Municipal Pool over the winter. The Recreation Committee has been working with Utility Superintendent Patrick DeMasi during the King Street Water Main Replacement Project in order to have new waterlines installed to serve Memorial Park and the Municipal Pool. This work should be completed before winter sets in. There also are plans to add some restrooms but this will be put on hold until next spring. Ms. Langley stated that since the only local regulation-sized soccer field is on Garvey Hill, the Committee is looking to reconfigure Memorial Park in order to install one there. This would involve some tree removal, earth bank reduction, etc. Chair Quinn would like to be sure that there is full commitment to complete this project so that it isn't left half-done at the end. Ms. Langley said that there is a solid plan and dedicated volunteers who will see the project finished (even if it can't be done in one year). The High School has given its permission to work within the baseball fields and having a regulation soccer field would bring more people to Memorial Park, which is located near the center of town. The current play structure would be relocated from the upper park area and the bank leading to this area would be reduced. Selectman Goslant added that the play structure would be moved to a more shaded area that would make it more user friendly during hot summer days. Manager Schulz asked when the earth work would start. Ms. Langley said that the volunteers would like to start as soon as possible. Manager Schulz would like to schedule a meeting with all interested parties in the near future to go over the work plans, etc.

Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to support the Recreation Committee's request to reconfigure Memorial Park as indicated above and to task municipal employees to assist with the project under the guidance of Manager Schulz. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- d. **Gerard and Nancy LaVarnway: Labor Day Weekend Fireworks Display.** Mr. LaVarnway would like to follow up on his last discussion with the Select Board (09/08/15) regarding the dangerous conditions generated by the public fireworks display held near his Hill Street property on Saturday, September 5, 2015. Mr. LaVarnway was grateful that the Select Board members apologized at that meeting and that Manager Schulz provided a written report to the LaVarnways. However, there were major problems with the permit process that they still would like addressed. For example, on the fireworks display permit form that North Star Fireworks submitted to the Town, the launching location was listed as "0 Turkey Hill" but the actual display came from municipal property on Cheney Hill. Also, approval of such permits is conditional on prior notification to neighboring property owners but this did not happen in this case. Mr. LaVarnway also feels that he has never received a proper explanation for why his repeated telephone calls to the state dispatcher in Williston did not generate a response from the Northfield Police Department (NPD). The dispatcher stated that the calls were relayed to Northfield but NPD Chief James Dziobek claimed when he met with them that this never occurred. Because of all these concerns, the LaVarnways would like the Select Board to create a new policy for public firework displays that originate on municipal properties that abut residential areas. Although Mr. LaVarnway personally hopes that such permits will not be granted in the future, if they are he would like the Town Manager held personally responsible for issuing public notifications. He also would like an independent spotter on hand throughout the fireworks display and a limit on the size of the fireworks used, including a ban of five inch (5") mortars. Ms. LaVarnway felt that so many things went wrong, some strong action needs to be taken to prevent a recurrence. Selectman Goslant said that there definitely were a number of "screw-ups" with this event. Chair Quinn said that the Select Board is waiting for Manager Schulz's report on how a new fireworks display permit policy should be developed. Mr. LaVarnway also wants a full investigation on why local first responders did not arrive on scene or contact them in any way. Chair Quinn confirmed that Manager Schulz will investigate all of this. Mr. LaVarnway would like he and his wife be kept informed regarding any new developments. Chair Quinn said this would happen.

V. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

- a. **Listers Chair Arlington Supplee: 2015 Grand List Errors & Omissions.** Mr. Supplee asked that the Select Board lower the Taxable Real Value of a property on Hallstrom Road from \$224,200 to \$116,600. The landowner had applied to the state for enrollment in the Current Use Program and the Listers were only informed recently that this request had been granted. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to approve this request. Selectman Gadbois asked if there was a deadline for applying for this property tax reduction. Mr. Supplee stated that even though there was, the Vermont Department of Taxation often violates its own guidelines by making such late approvals. The Listers should have been informed of this change in tax status by April but were only informed last week. Selectman Doney is reluctant to make this late change but sees no alternative. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **September 8, 2015 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #07-16.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to approve Warrant #07-16 in the amount of \$90,550.08. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through August 16, 2015 Supplement.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the bi-weekly payroll supplement in the amount of \$408.53. Manager Schulz explained that the paperwork for one of the part-time police officers was not processed in time for inclusion in the original bi-weekly payroll. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- c. **Approval of Bi-Weekly Payroll through September 13, 2015.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$87,835.22. Selectman Gadbois noted the large amount of Northfield Police Department (NPD) overtime and asked if this was attributable to the Labor Day Weekend Festivities. Manager Schulz said that most of it was. Selectman Maxwell asked if this annual extra expense was budgeted. Manager Schulz confirmed that this is a consideration when the NPD budget is developed. Selectman Goslant feels that even in the absence of a special event like this, NPD overtime expense have been getting out of hand and he would like to see this fully investigated. Manager Schulz said that he has been issuing regular reminders to Chief Dziobek to keep overtime expenses under control. Chair Quinn thought that the new NPD coverage schedule was developed to reduce (or even eliminate) NPD overtime expense but this has not happened. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Request to Amend the Approved Certification of Approved Location for Salvage Yard (Baroffio's Garage).** Earlier this year (06/23/15), the Select Board endorsed the request from Baroffio's Garage for an Approved Certification of Approved Location for Salvage Yard for their business located at 616 North Main Street. However, the State was about to provide its stamp of approval when it was discovered that the finding document signed by the Select Board did not include an expiration date for this approval. The standard time frame for this is five (5) years and this is what the State recommends. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Goslant, to amend its previous approval of Baroffio Garage's application to be an Approved Location for Salvage Yard by adding a five (5) year expiration date for this approval. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- b. **Bid Award for Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) Billing Services.** The Town of Northfield is seeking to outsource ambulance bill collection so bid proposals were solicited with a due date of Friday, September 4, 2015. Manager Schulz reported that four (4) proposals were received by the deadline but one was rejected because it did not comply with the bid specifications. EMS Billing Services' proposal is a \$15.00 charge per billable run and Central Vermont EMS' proposal is \$28.00 per billable run. Lyndon Rescue's proposal is to charge 5.25% of total billable fees collected, which would come out to about \$14,300 each year (based on projected billable runs). Manager Schulz said that he, Finance Director Laurie Baroffio, and Ambulance Chief Lawton Rutter have carefully reviewed the proposals and at this point are leaning towards recommending that the bid be awarded to Lyndon Rescue since payments to them would be incentive-based, the ambulance bills would have to be collected before they receive any money from us.

Chair Quinn asked if the references provided by these bidders had been checked out. Manager Schulz confirmed this had been done and no red flags had been found. Selectman Maxwell asked why the Town was seeking to outsource the billing process. Manager Schulz said the main reason was to save costs by eliminating the part-time position that now handles this at a cost of about \$14,000 per year. In addition, Lyndon Rescue's proposal includes free training for NAS personnel on how to provide proper billing documentation, etc. Normally, the Town itself would have to pay for this training. Selectman Doney, who is a NAS first responder, added that this type of training can be rather expensive. Chief Rutter also likes that Lyndon Rescue would be paid only after they have collected the fees and not just for sending out bills. He added that Lyndon Rescue's references were very strong. Also, by outsourcing the billing, Northfield will no longer have to pay for relicensing billing software each year, which can cost several thousand dollars. In addition, Chief Rutter noted that starting next month, a new EMS coding system comes into effect and this would have required extensive internal training had the billing process stayed in house.

Selectman Goslant noted that each year Northfield has to write off a number of NAS bills that are uncollectable. Since Lyndon Rescue would have an extra incentive to collect, would this number be reduced? Chief Rutter hoped that by streamlining the bill collection process, the number of abated bills would be reduced. However, since many bills are abated because the patient is deceased, bankrupt, etc., there are no perfect solutions. Chair Quinn generally prefers performance-based contracts but he is concerned about an apparent conflict of interest since the person who prepared Lyndon Rescue's proposal (Mark Podgwaite) also is a NAS member. He would like to postpone action until more research has been done into this matter. Chief Rutter said that he had been aware of this concern and that is why he let Manager Schulz and Ms. Baroffio take the lead when the recommendation in favor of Lyndon Rescue was developed. This matter will be on the next regular meeting agenda (10/13/15).

- c. **Bid Award for Engineering Services (Elm Street Retaining Wall).** Manager Schulz stated that the retaining wall is rapidly deteriorating and Northfield did receive a state grant to cover the expense of the engineering services. Five (5) proposals were received by yesterday's deadline. Since there was not a big difference between dollar amounts, Manager Schulz would like to postpone awarding the bid until the specifics of each proposal have been fully reviewed. He will be assisted by Road Foreman Ramon Hudson and Stephen Fitzhugh (who did preliminary work on this during his tenure as Village Manager).
- d. **Bid Award for FY 2015/2016 Fuel Delivery (Heating Oil, Propane, Diesel Fuel, & No-Lead Gasoline).** Manager Schulz stated that he worked with the Northfield and Roxbury School Districts to develop a combined bid process. The bid proposals were opened today and Gillespie Fuels & Propane was the apparent low bidder for heating oil, propane, and diesel fuel. SB Collins is the apparent low bidder for the delivery of no-lead gasoline. Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to accept Gillespie Fuels & Propane as the low bidder for heating oil, propane, and diesel fuel. **Motion passed 5-0-0.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to accept SB Collins as the low bidder for no-lead gasoline. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

- e. **Household Hazardous & Business Waste Collection.** Chair Quinn noted that as the newest member of the Mountain Alliance, Northfield will be hosting the next collection of household hazardous waste on Saturday, October 10, 2015, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Fire Station (128 Wall Street). This will be limited to residents of Northfield, Randolph, Brookfield, and Braintree.

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Governor's Highway Safety Program.** Selectman Gadbois had a number of questions regarding this program, including when Northfield is reimbursed when one of its police officers takes part in an out-of-town event. Manager Schulz stated that the Accounting Office sends a request for reimbursement after each event. Since NPD officers take part in these events on a fairly regular basis, sending out the reimbursement paperwork is a routine process.
- b. **Northfield Police Department Vehicles.** Selectman Doney asked what happened to the old Chevy Impala that was being used by the (former) part-time Police Detective. Manager Schulz stated that since the vehicle has minimum resale value, it was Chief Dziobek's recommendation to keep it on hand. Selectman Doney would like to see it sold and the proceeds used to repair the damaged garage doors. Selectman Goslant asked how many police vehicles now were in use. Manager Schulz said that there were six (6), including the aforementioned Chevy Impala. He believes that it now is Select Board consensus to sell this vehicle so he will inform Chief Dziobek of this.
- c. **Central Street Water Project.** Selectman Doney was very displeased with the road patching job done on Central Street and South Main Street after the new water mains were installed. It seemed to him that the job was rushed in order to get it all done before the Labor Day holiday. Manager Schulz will contact the contractor about the Select Board's concerns. Selectman Doney would like them to come back and fix it if the bumps in the roads don't go down by next spring.

X. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a. **Police Conference.** Selectman Doney noted in the Manager's written report that Chief Dziobek and one of his officers will be attending a conference in Chicago and that the hotel, airfare, and registration costs will be reimbursed by the Governor's Highway Safety Program. He wants confirmation that the conference attendees will generate no other expenses for which the municipality will be responsible. Chair Quinn also is concerned that in their absence, work shifts will need to be covered by other officers on overtime. Selectman Goslant also has concerns about this matter. Manager Schulz will check on this.
- b. **Northfield Highway Department.** In his report, Manager Schulz stated that the Highway Department has finished its street painting, including all crosswalks and stop bars. Selectman Maxwell would like Manager Schulz to look into the crosswalks located near Northfield schools. Given concerns expressed recently on the Front Porch Forum, Selectman Doney also would like to see more police presence near crosswalks to ensure pedestrian safety. Kathleen Lott doesn't believe that the crosswalks near the Falls General Store have been done. Manager Schulz will look into this.

XI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED). There was none.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION. Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Doney, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a personnel matter with Manager Schulz present. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 8:57 p.m.

Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Doney, to come out of executive session. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board came out of executive session at 9:17 p.m. No action was taken.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Selectman Maxwell, seconded by Selectman Doney, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the regular Select Board meeting of October 13, 2015.